



Robley Rex VA Medical Center, Louisville, KY

The Volunteer Promise

Volume 63

May 2010

Mark Your Calendars!

Thursday, July 22
VAVS Committee Meeting
VAMC Room D010, 7PM

Sunday, May 9
Mother's Day

Saturday, May 15
Armed Forces Day

Wednesday, May 26
Run for the Wall
Motorcycle Riders Visit

Monday, May 31
Memorial Day Holiday
VA Admin Offices closed

Monday, June 14
Flag Day

Sunday, June 20
Father's Day

Sunday, July 4
Independence Day

Saturday, July 17
Welcome Home

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VA Medical Center Renamed After A Volunteer



A renaming dedication ceremony for the Robley Rex Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center took place on Saturday, April 10, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. (EST). 800 Zorn Avenue, Louisville, KY.

Senator Mitch McConnell and Congressman John Yarmuth both of whom spoke at the event, introduced the legislation to rename the Louisville VA Medical Center to the Robley Rex Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in 2009.

Mr. Robley Rex, who was born in Hopkinsville, KY, served in the U.S. Army from 1919 to 1922. After being discharged he returned to Kentucky, eventually making Louisville his home.

Mr. Rex then personified serving others as a VA volunteer for 23 years, with over 14 thousand hours of service at the medical center. During this time he was a member of and an active spokesperson for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the Veterans of WWI of the USA. He served extensively in many elected and appointed offices, within these organizations. He also served as a Veteran's Service Officer for the DAV and the VFW. Mr. Rex was honored in 2005 by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as "National Volunteer of the Year". On his 107th birthday, Mr. Rex was presented the Kentucky Governor's Award of Outstanding Volunteer Service.

He not only brought a contagious smile which welcomed everyone but also embraced the essence of volunteering. He was like many of our volunteers warm hearted, considerate of others, and quick to lend a hand when one was needed. This dedication is a major milestone showing how much our Volunteers mean to our Veterans and to us.



Run for the Wall 2010

Motorcycle riders making their annual trek to Washington, DC, to visit the Vietnam Wall on Memorial Day will once again be revving their engines and taking a short detour to visit the Veterans at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, May 26, and join us at approximately 8:45 a.m. to welcome this popular group of riders.

As always, we plan to offer packaged snacks and drinks for the riders as they continue on their cross-country trip. To learn more about the visit, or to offer donations of snacks, contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221.

2010 Summer Student Volunteers

Spring is here and the school year will soon be wrapping up. Students across the Louisville area will share a portion of their summer vacation volunteering at Robley Rex VA Medical Center. You will recognize the students by their royal blue polo-style uniform shirt and their official volunteer name badge. This uniform should be seen as a sign of a quality VA healthcare team member. These individuals are future physicians, nurses, administrators and Veterans. When you see a student dressed in this uniform, be sure to welcome him or her to the team!

Students participating in the summer volunteer program are eligible to compete in a variety of scholarship opportunities, including the James Parke Memorial Scholarship Award that is sponsored by the National VAVS Committee, the local VAVS Committee's "Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award," the Kentucky/Indiana Paralyzed Veterans of America Scholarship, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars "Voice of Democracy" essay competition.

For additional information about student volunteer opportunities, contact Rhonda Smith, Student Volunteer Coordinator, Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6898.

National Rehab Special Events

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sponsors several national rehabilitation special events for our nation's Veterans each year. All of the annual national programs promote the healing of both body and spirit as they motivate eligible Veterans to reach their full potential, improve their independence, achieve a healthier lifestyle and enjoy a higher quality of life overall.

Each program enhances the physical, social and emotional well-being of the Veterans who participate. Each event improves the awareness of the therapeutic value of recreation, sports or creative arts therapy in the lives of our nation's Veterans.

Louisville VA Medical Center participates in multiple events, sending eligible Veterans to multiple events, including the Disabled American Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, National Veterans Wheelchair Games, and National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. The 2010 Winter Sports Clinic was held in early April, and we sent one participant this year.

Upcoming 2010 events include:

National Veterans Wheelchair Games
July 4 - July 9, 2010
Denver, Colorado

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival
October 18 - 25, 2010
LaCrosse, Wisconsin



Local Veterans Creative Arts Competition winners will be entered into the national competition. National winners are invited to attend the National Creative Arts Festival. For additional information on the local competition, please contact Tim Neidiffer at (502) 287-5190.

While veterans' meals and lodging expenses are paid by the national organization upon their arrival at the event site, local medical centers are tasked with providing the transportation funds to get them there. Donations to support transportation costs for local veterans should be directed to GPF 508 (Wheelchair Games, Winter Sports Clinic) or GPF 509 (Creative Arts Festival).

2010 Volunteer Awards Program



WOW! Our volunteers are AMAZING!!!

Regular Scheduled Volunteers – 762

Hours Worked – 173,546

Total Value of Hours Worked - \$3,384,147

Value of Material Donations - \$311,543

Total Monetary Donations - \$140,045

Congratulations to Robley Rex VA Medical Center's Outstanding Volunteers of the Year!

Volunteers who were unable to attend can check with Voluntary Service for information on awards.

Community Veteran Needs

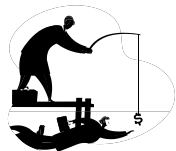
VA programs encompass veterans in the community as well as veterans who are admitted to the medical center or treated in any of the outpatient clinic locations. Two important programs offered to Veterans who have serious and persistent mental or clinical illness are Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) and Community Residential Care (CRC). These programs support our Veterans in the community who have had repeated hospitalizations by providing case management services that are intended to stabilize medical conditions, minimize the need for that hospitalization, and to promote overall improved health.

Social isolation is a major health concern for those who have struggled with serious mental illness for years. An important component of the program is to provide opportunities for increased socialization.

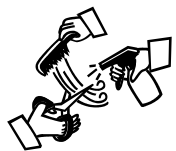
Current requests for adoption or support from these programs include:



⇒ *One group of Veterans would like to start a garden at the home where they live. They would need all things related to gardening, including seeds, tools, gloves, tomato plants, etc.*



⇒ *A veteran in Shelbyville loves to fish. He has his gear (old and run down but functional). His monthly spending money totals \$60. He often runs out of funds before the next month just from purchasing bait and maybe a few soft drinks to take in the cooler that he found in the trash and cleaned up. It would be awesome if any of the veteran groups go fishing, or know of groups that do and could include him. Or if any fishing supplies are ever donated that would be terrific.*



⇒ *A female veteran, also in Shelbyville, likes to get her hair done twice a month with her \$60 spending money, but she never has transportation to the salon and back. There is no bus service, and it's too far to walk. The VA staff who supervise her care are happy to take her to her appointments, but they can't wait two hours for her to get her hair done because they do have other veterans to see. If there are any groups that visit or are interested in helping women veterans, she would be a good candidate. She also likes to sew by hand and could use sewing supplies and material. She is the go to person in the home when any of the residents want something mended.*



⇒ *Several veterans love to do "crafty" things. Craft kits are an excellent way for them to express their creative abilities.*

Anyone wishing to support these veterans may contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221 to learn more.

Welcome Home Event

The Robley Rex VA Medical Center holds an annual Welcome Home event to honor Veterans who have actively served our country in the armed forces. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, July 17, 2010, and will honor the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard. I would like to extend an invitation to you to participate in this tribute to the men and women who have sacrificed so much to preserve our freedoms and protect the peace, both within our borders and in active combat zones.



Members of the 123rd have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and many of them served multiple tours. In addition, they have assisted with relief efforts in New Orleans and Haiti, and have served our local community during such crises as the 2008 Ice Storm. They readily serve, usually behind the scenes, without fanfare or recognition. I know that you share our passion for members of our military, current and past. This is an excellent opportunity to honor and celebrate these deserving men and women.

VA will be responsible for the purchase of meals for the family members. Activities are being planned for the children. There are multiple ways that our volunteer partners can help out. For instance, you could consider hosting an ice cream booth or children's activity, or provide a door prize.

For more information or to support this program, please contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221.

Radiology/MRI Support Needed

Radiology Service would like your assistance in their efforts to make the MRI procedure rooms more soothing for the Veterans who are undergoing a procedure. One of the things they would like to install is a crisp, clear mural that will mentally transport the Veteran to a relaxing environment with its nature scene. The mural measures 83 inches (h) x 170 (w) and it would cover an entire wall. The cost of the mural (and we would like to install one in both of the two MRI procedure rooms) would be \$890 each. Considerations in the cost are the fire resistant qualities that are mandated by safety codes, the ability to clean it without damaging the image, and the ability to remove and replace the artwork if necessary. Anyone who has had an MRI will agree that the sterile environment and the need to be completely still during the procedure are the most difficult considerations. The addition of the mural(s) will have a positive impact.

For more information or to support this program, please contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221.

Tuberculosis (TB) Test

All volunteers who provide service within the hospital, including all outpatient clinics, are required by VA regulations and state law to complete an annual TB test. Those volunteers who must meet the requirement should receive a notice from Voluntary Service with a reminder to take the test. Rather than consider this a "nuisance," volunteers should consider this a benefit. Taking the test will assure you that you do not have the disease, or allow you to receive medical treatment before your condition becomes critical. Do it for your peace of mind, and do it for the ones you love.

What is a PPD (TB Skin Test)?

If your test is positive, it does not mean you have TB or that you are contagious. A positive test means you have been exposed to TB. You may be asked to get a chest x-ray.

TB Infection and TB Disease are Different:

A person with TB infection has the tubercle bacillus, but is not sick and will not spread TB to others. A person with TB disease is sick (has signs of the illness- coughing, with or without blood tinged sputum, weight loss, night sweats, fever, fatigue) and can spread the disease to others.



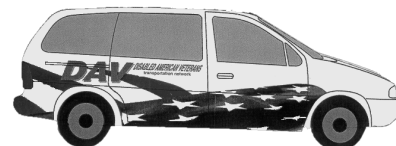
“Helping Hands” Volunteers Needed



In collaboration with Nursing Service and Nutrition and Food Service, Voluntary Service has created a new volunteer assignment which we are calling the Helping Hands volunteer. The new assignment combines two previously defined volunteer assignments. Individuals assigned as Helping Hands volunteers will be assisting hospitalized Veterans. The volunteer will report to a designated nurse manager/supervisor to be assigned to a specific patient. The patient may be one who needs a sitter to help prevent falls or someone who needs assistance at mealtime. Helping Hands volunteers will receive formal training conducted by Nursing Service staff.

This assignment is available weekdays, evenings and weekends. For additional information, call Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6898.

Volunteers Transporting Veterans



Know anyone who recently retired or has plans to retire soon? That is the time when many people are looking for opportunities to give back. This is also the ideal group to recruit for the Volunteer Transportation Network!

The need for qualified volunteer drivers is increasing with the expansion of the transportation program.

The Transportation Network's DAV Hospital Service Coordinator reported that she is currently declining an average of five or more Veteran transportation requests per day. We currently need volunteer drivers for the grounds, for local transportation, and throughout the extended community.

Drivers should be available to drive one or more full days per week and must have current driver's license and proof of insurance. Prior to receiving a driving assignment, volunteer applicants must have a TB skin test and must pass a physical examination. These are provided free of charge by the VA.

Volunteer Help Needed

Volunteers provide a unique brand of support for the Louisville VA Medical Center, assisting staff with a variety of activities that support the care and treatment of Veterans. Volunteers may provide clerical support, direct or indirect patient care, mechanical support, transportation support or grounds maintenance support. **Assignments are available throughout the medical center and interested individuals may contact Voluntary Service to discuss their personal interests.** Some of the more critical needs at this time include:

Clerical Support with Computer Skills: Volunteers (18 years or older) with computer skills are needed in multiple administrative areas. Additional details are available in the Voluntary Service office.

Telephone Skills Needed – An assignment is available to support the clinics in making appointment reminder calls to patients. This could be an evening or Saturday assignment. The Patient Advocate for Inpatients is also seeking volunteers to make follow-up telephone calls to Veterans following an inpatient stay. Training and materials will be provided.

Transportation Services - Drivers and Transportation Coordinators are needed for the Volunteer Transportation Program, a special service staffed by volunteers who are dedicated to assuring that Veterans have the transportation they need to come to the medical center and to community-based outpatient clinics.

Shuttle Transportation Drivers – Drivers are needed to operate the VA Medical Center's Grounds Shuttle. The drivers in this program remain on the VA property and offer transportation assistance to Veterans moving to and from their automobiles and the medical center entrances.

Evening/Weekend Assignments: A new assignment is available on the inpatient units sitting with patients who may be at risk for falls or assisting patients at meal times. This assignment is called “Helping Hands” and is also available weekdays. In addition, some of the telephone assignments may take place evenings or weekends. Volunteers who work in the Emergency Department may also work evenings and/or weekends.

MONETARY AND MATERIAL NEEDS FOR VETERAN PROGRAMS

Welcome Home: Funds are needed to support our annual Welcome Home event, which honors returning combat Veterans. These events allow for them to reacquaint themselves with their families. These funds are used for food and activities to support these events. Donations for this program should be directed to GPF 532 (OIF/OEF Welcome Home) . (See Article on Page 4)

Social Work Service Emergency Fund: Donations to this account support patient emergency needs in situations not covered by medical center resources. These include certain travel expenses and clothing needs for patients upon discharge from the medical center. Donations for this purpose should be directed to GPF #502.

Radiology/MRI Artwork: Funds for this project should be donated to GPF 500 with a note designating the specific purpose. An article outlining the project is posted on page 4 of this newsletter.

Patient Comfort Items: Donations to this account will be used to support the Comfort Cart, a program in which volunteers provide personal hygiene items to hospitalized Veterans. Donations for this purpose should be directed to GPF #515.

Stand Down for the Homeless: Funds are needed to support Stand Down 2010. Proceeds will be used to purchase clothing and personal items for homeless Veterans who need our support. Donations to this program should be directed to General Post Fund (GPF) 525.

National Veterans Creative Arts Program: Donations to this account are used to support the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival and the local competition. Funds are used for transportation costs for patients who are invited to participate in the national festival. Under some circumstances, funds may also be used to pay for one attendant accompanying a Veteran artist. Donations for this program should be directed to GPF #509.

Program Adoptions: Several programs are in need of adoption to provide healthy snacks on a routine basis. To find out more about program adoptions, contact Voluntary Service.

For a complete list of General Post Funds Accounts and their definitions, refer to the General Post Funds and Material Donations booklet published by Voluntary Service.

The Volunteer Promise

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You may also view our newsletter on line at <http://www.louisville.va.gov/>. Scroll down and click on "Volunteer or Give," then click on Volunteer Promise Newsletter.

We welcome your thoughts about this newsletter and your ideas for articles. Contact Voluntary Service to share your suggestions.

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